

Response to SCR 32 of the 2023 Regular Legislative Session

*Report of Findings and Recommendations from the Alopecia Awareness
Task Force*

January 31, 2024



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Executive Summary

The Task Force on Alopecia Awareness, established by [Senate Concurrent Resolution 32](#) by Senator Price, is dedicated to raising awareness, improving access to care, and supporting individuals living with alopecia and other hair and scalp disorders in Louisiana.

To achieve this goal, the task force conducted a comprehensive review of existing research, consulted with healthcare professionals and community stakeholders, and surveyed individuals affected by hair loss conditions.

Summary of Findings:

- **Prevalence:** Studies indicate that approximately 1 in 50 people experience alopecia or another significant form of hair loss. The prevalence varies across demographics, with higher rates among women and individuals of color.
- **Impact:** Hair loss can have a profound impact on individuals' physical self- image, leading to feelings of shame, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, social stigma and discrimination associated with hair loss can negatively impact personal relationships and professional opportunities.
- **Existing Resources:** Access to dermatologists and trichologists is limited, particularly in rural areas. Support groups and other resources are often fragmented and lack visibility.
- **Gaps in Access:** Insurance coverage for dermatology and trichology services is inconsistent, creating financial barriers for many individuals seeking diagnosis and treatment.
- **Financial Burden:** The cost of hair loss treatments, including medication, wigs, and hair transplantation, can be significant, placing a financial strain on individuals and families.

Section 1 – Background

Alopecia impacts the lives of more than eighty million people in the United States and can affect individuals of any age, sex, race, or ethnicity. It can appear gradually or suddenly depending on the underlying cause and can involve the scalp or whole body. The experience of hair loss can be psychologically damaging and may cause intense emotional suffering, often leading to personal, social, and work-related problems for those who experience it. Although there are a variety of causes and contributions to various degrees of Alopecia, there is no single treatment option that works for everyone, leading to a desperate need for the development of a wide range of novel therapies.

In an effort to promote awareness of Alopecia and other hair and scalp disorders and support those individuals affected by these conditions, the Louisiana Legislature established the Task Force on Alopecia Awareness to study and make recommendations on increasing awareness of Alopecia and other hair and scalp disorders and their effect on the wellbeing of individuals living with these conditions.

The Alopecia Awareness Task Force is charged with providing a written report of findings and recommendations, including any specific proposals for legislation, to the Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, the Senate and House Committees on Health and Welfare, and the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library.

Section 2 – Findings & Recommendations

Key Findings:

- Alopecia and other hair and scalp disorders are prevalent in Louisiana, affecting individuals of all ages and demographics.
- Hair loss significantly impacts individuals' physical, emotional, and social well-being, leading to anxiety, depression, and social isolation.
- Existing resources in Louisiana are limited and fragmented, with gaps in awareness, education, and access to quality care.
- Financial burdens associated with hair loss treatments create additional challenges for individuals and healthcare systems.

Recommendations:

- **Public Awareness:** Launch multi-media campaigns to educate the public about the prevalence, causes, and impacts of alopecia and other hair and scalp disorders.
- **Access to Care:** Advocate for expanded insurance coverage for dermatologist and trichologist services, including diagnosis, treatment, and wig fitting.
- **Financial Assistance:** Establish financial assistance programs to help individuals with limited financial resources access necessary hair loss treatments.

- **Healthcare Education:** Develop educational programs and training resources for healthcare professionals to improve their knowledge and skills in diagnosing and managing hair and scalp disorders.
- **Research:** Invest in research initiatives to further understand the causes, treatment options, and potential cures for alopecia and other hair and scalp disorders.

Specific Proposals for Legislation:

- **Medicaid Expansion:** Include coverage for dermatology and trichology services within the Louisiana Medicaid program to ensure access for underserved populations.
- **Insurance Coverage Mandates:** Implement legislation requiring insurance companies to cover medically necessary treatments for alopecia and other hair and scalp disorders.
- **Public Health Awareness Funding:** Allocate state funding for continuation of SCR32 Alopecia Awareness Task Force, public awareness campaigns, and educational initiatives on hair loss conditions.
- **Research:** Support research initiatives focused on understanding the causes, developing effective treatments, and finding potential cures for alopecia and other hair and scalp disorders.

Section 3 - Conclusion:

The findings of this report highlight the significant impact of alopecia and other hair and scalp disorders on individuals and families in Louisiana. The report has proven the need for the work of SCR32 Alopecia Awareness Task Force to continue. For this to have a valid outcome and impact on the residents of Louisiana, more time for research and the items requested for implementation is needed. Utilization of the trailblazing task force's recommendations will raise awareness, improve access to care, and provide vital support for individuals affected by these conditions. The task force believes that by working together, we can create a more informed and supportive environment for individuals living with hair loss in Louisiana.

Additional Resources:

1. National Alopecia Areata Foundation (NAAF)

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